FORUM ON ACCESSIBILITY

TO

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

NOVEMBER 2002

FINAL REPORT

The Council on Post-Secondary Education

March 2003

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Acknowledgements

The *Forum on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education* held in Winnipeg in November 2002 was made possible because of the support and assistance of many people. Appreciation is extended to the more than 90 representatives from the colleges and universities, high schools, government, and community organizations that attended.

Thanks is also extended to the Forum Planning Committee that consisted of John Wiens, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba; Kim Clare, Director of the Inner City Social Work Program of the Winnipeg Education Centre, both who also capably served as Co-Facilitators; Nolan Reilly, Professor of History at the University of Winnipeg; Gerald Bashforth, Vice President, Enterprise Development at Assiniboine Community College, and government staff.

The Forum included guest speakers, student and institutional panel discussions followed by small group sessions. The words of the guest speakers and students provided much inspiration for the session discussions. As well, the institutional representatives, the panel moderators Nolan Reilly and Gerald Bashforth, and the team of facilitators ensured the day was a success.

Appreciation is extended to Principal Gary Comack and staff at R.B. Russell Vocational School for their support, assistance, and use of the school facility for hosting the Forum.

Executive Summary

In November, 2002, a *Forum on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education* hosted by the Minister of Advanced Education and Training, and the Council on Post-Secondary Education brought together over 90 representatives from the post-secondary institutions, high schools, community organizations, and government. The purpose of the forum was to discuss current initiatives, as well as explore ideas and strategies for furthering accessibility in the future.

The event featured several guest presentations, student and institutional panel discussions, and group participant discussion sessions. This report contains the key discussion points that evolved in response to a series of questions presented to the small group sessions.

In the discussion following the student panel, participants identified several barriers to post-secondary education in Manitoba. These included financial, cultural, geographic, physical, language, personal, social, academic, institutional, informational, government-related and societal. Accessibility strategies that seem be to working included prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR), distance education/Campus Manitoba, community-based programs, partnerships, existing support systems and resources, and ACCESS programs.

Suggested strategies that may work to dismantle continuing barriers included more personal and professional development, more dialogue and communication, the need for more programming, training, and resource-related initiatives, particularly more Aboriginal faculty and students, more support for visible minority students in view of increasing immigration, and PLAR. To further accessibility, and effect positive change, participants identified the need for partnerships and coordination of services, increased awareness, expansion and promotion of ACCESS programs, support services, funding and training, and the need to review existing policies, and improve long-range planning.

In viewing accessibility as a public good, participants spoke of the investment in individuals, in the community, and in the labour market, particularly the need to train and educate the Aboriginal community. In terms of the implications for community organizations, participants emphasized the importance of creating partnerships/close linkages with other community groups and the institutions.

Following the institutional panel discussion, participants identified the community outreach and existing programs and services as examples of what institutions have done to further accessibility. In terms of what more institutions can do within their existing budgets, increasing student supports, and several program, policy, and staff-related suggestions were offered. Increasing student involvement, and making program and institution-related changes were identified as ways that institutions can advise and work with students to further accessibility.

Introduction

Post secondary education is considered essential for success in today's labour market, as the demand for education increases in order to meet the challenges of a knowledge-based economy. Providing access to post secondary education for all Manitobans is a key priority of Manitoba Advanced Education and Training and the Council on Post-Secondary Education. The opportunity to acquire a post-secondary education should be available to all that wish to attend.

Accessibility is more than simply minimizing financial barriers to post-secondary education. Potential students require information about options and need to be encouraged and assisted to understand their options, to make informed decisions, and pursue their aspirations. Institutions want to be mindful that accessibility is as important an issue to manage when enrollment is high, as when it is lower. Those students who require additional support to enter into post-secondary education and be successful are ever present. Finding ways to meet their needs is the mark of an institution that understands the true meaning of education.

In November 2002, the Honourable Diane McGifford, Minister of Advanced Education and Training, and the Council on Post-Secondary Education hosted a *Forum on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education*. The event brought together over 90 representatives from post-secondary institutions, high schools, community organizations, and government to discuss accessibility initiatives currently underway, as well as to generate ideas for furthering accessibility to post-secondary education in Manitoba in the future.

Format and Participants

The event featured opening night guest speakers, and student and institutional panels, followed by participant discussion sessions the next day. The Forum co-facilitators were John Wiens, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, and Kim Clare, Director of the Inner City Social Work Program of the Winnipeg Education Centre. The co-facilitators opened the Forum by sharing some of their views on ways to further accessibility to post-secondary education in Manitoba. This set the stage for opening night presentations by Don Robertson and Minister McGifford. This was followed by several guest presentations (see Forum Agenda and Guest Speaker Biographies in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively).

Representatives from a broad selection of community organizations were invited to participate in the Forum. The community groups were chosen to represent the perspectives of the Aboriginal community, disability organizations, immigrant groups, women, youth, the Deaf and hard of hearing communities, and employment, education and training organizations. All publicly funded post-

secondary education institutions were represented at the Forum. A small group of government representatives were invited to attend as observers.

The morning of the following full day session included a panel discussion comprised of students, and moderated by Gerald Bashforth, Vice President, Enterprises and Development, Assiniboine Community College, followed by participant discussion. The afternoon session featured a panel discussion consisting of representatives from the post-secondary institutions, and moderated by Nolan Reilly, History Professor at the University of Winnipeg, and a second participant discussion session (see Appendix 3 for List of Panelists).

Following the panel sessions, forum participants were divided into groups led by facilitators and were asked to respond to a series of questions. Each group then presented their ideas to the forum, and the co-facilitators summarized the ideas and strategies discussed. The Chair of the Council on Post-Secondary Education made concluding remarks and commented on the value of bringing together individuals for discussion to the Forum. The Minister closed the Forum by thanking participants for their input, and offering to continue the dialogue.

This report summarizes the key points made in the participant discussion sessions, and the participant evaluation (see Appendix 4).

Summary of Participant Discussion Sessions

Discussion Following the Student Panel

Forum participants provided comments to the following questions:

1. What do you perceive to be the primary barriers to post-secondary education in Manitoba?

- **Funding/Financial Support** – there is need to increase financial support for all students including ACCESS program students, and provide student and program support; improve translation/interpretive services; address costs associated with students relocating as institutions have limited funds; need to address transition from social assistance; institutions need emergency funding to respond to student needs

- **Cultural** – there is need to address urban/rural and north/south cultural adaptations; is problem of culture shock/isolation related to family and community expectations; is need for healing process – from colonization to de-colonization; is need to overcome cross-cultural differences; improve language and accreditation for immigrants

- **Geographic** – is problem of alienation and isolation when leaving home communities; remote locations do not receive as much support, and make it difficult to access post-secondary education; is need to prepare learners for move to larger campuses; is need to meet the demand in rural and northern communities; is lack of exposure to large university sites

- **Physical** – improve wheelchair accessibility; provide accommodations for those with disabilities; is need for more translation/interpretation services; is need for supports at institutions for those with disabilities; students experience difficulty getting supports at institutions

- **Language** – provide support for learning English as a Second Language (ESL); there is lack of language supports, is need for higher level ESL support; interpreters have to be familiar with the discipline; language counselling needs to be accessible

- **Personal/Social** – there is fear among students, and lack of self-esteem/self-identity/self-worth; there is lack of family and peer supports; is need to find balance between school and home commitments; is lack of role models; there are difficulties of age and family responsibilities; families need to encourage their children

- **Academic** – students are not prepared for academic requirements of post-secondary education – tutorials are needed; there is lack of career focus – no realization of possibilities; students are ill-prepared for career choices i.e., math and science skills; there is need for bridging/remediation; is lack of appropriate/relevant information in high schools; early intervention will make transition easier

- **Institutional/Program** – faculty need to be educated; many programs are available, but there is no coordination; there are difficulties in understanding instructors, there is staff burnout; there are culturally uninformed/insensitive instructors at universities; there is a lack of advising; inadequate supports for distance education; need to consider criteria or pre-requisites for courses for non-sequential students; is need for community/cohort support in all institutions; need to look at mentorships in CUB program – who identifies students; need to increase enrollments in ACCESS programs

- **Information/Communication** – there is lack of information; professionals don't seem to know; is lack of awareness of ACCESS programs, and of colleges and vocational options; is important to encourage students to get involved in dissemination of information about access; communication between the players is important

- **Government** – need to consider policies of welfare department – there is lack of support; there are "huge" issues from welfare department and lack of communication between welfare and education departments; is obstacle of paperwork/process for applying for funds; the system is not necessarily "user friendly"; is need for simplicity of forms to complete; is too much bureaucracy; must consider federal/provincial jurisdiction

- **Societal** – public attitude has to change; is problem of racism; territorialism is obstacle to partnerships; is lack of support groups; is need for Learning Community/Outreach

2. What accessibility strategies seem to be working?

- **Prior Learning and Recognition (PLAR)** – PLAR can reduce training time for those in workforce; PLAR allows for knowledge gained from other means

- **Distance Education/Campus Manitoba** – distance education takes programs to remote areas; allows students to stay in community

- **Community-Based Programs** – although already proven successful, there is need to continue the shift toward community-based education, including trades, rotating programs; is important to take programs to remote communities; establish college regional centres in north; these programs

create a safe learning environment, they provide an accessible beginning and a linkage to post-secondary education (laddered approach)

- **Partnerships/linkages** – there are established links between education and community organizations, i.e., Adult Learning Centres are working together; there are linkages between community colleges and high schools

- **Existing Support Systems** – there are existing role models, smaller models/cohort groups, peer support groups; there is support from student aid advisors; tutoring; mentoring; there is close person attention/advisory; one-on-one; there is a welcoming and respectful atmosphere in institutions

- **Resources** – there has been program funding for Adult Learning Centres; assistance for special needs students; and an improved student aid approach

- **ACCESS Programs** – ACCESS training spots have increased; current programs have several supports in place (social, economic, peer); ACCESS programs are well-developed in Manitoba

- **Other Models and Programs** – examples include Clustered Learning/Cluster Groups; College and University Bound Program/Career Trek; Winnipeg Education Centre Programs; Transition Year Programs; Individual Education Plans; and Flexible Models/Multiple Access

3. What other strategies might work to dismantle continuing barriers?

- **Personal/Professional Development** – there is need to increase mentoring; tutoring; role modelling; personal development nurturing; building self-esteem, basic skills development; career professionals need to work with students; is need for counselling for those in junior and senior high school; students need someone to connect with who understands their journey

- **Dialogue/Communication** – there is need to increase awareness of diversity among staff in institutions; must reach out to community groups; need more informed staff; better outreach; reach out more to community groups; improve system of delivering our message to community; is lack of education/funding information for welfare clients; improve dialogue between welfare and education

- **Programming/Training-Related** – need more community-based delivery; flexible scheduling; expand distance education; add more interactive on-line delivery of programs; increase CUB/Career-Trek like programs; add newer technologies for Deaf persons; expand community-based transition programs

to meet post-secondary education requirements; develop fast-track to access programs/careers; mandate accessibility training as professional development

- **Resource-Related** – coordinate funding sources (within province and including band funding); increase funding, staff, space; improve resource allocation to avoid duplication of service; better utilize high school space and technology to meet (in rural areas) adult learning centre needs; hire specialized individuals to teach cross-cultural issues; increase day care/drop in centres as informal gathering places

- **Increase Aboriginal Faculty and Students** – involve more Aboriginal faculty in budget process – actively pursue Aboriginal faculty, develop University College of the North; increase Aboriginal students in B.Ed. program to increase number of Aboriginal teachers

- **PLAR/Retention Strategies**– increase articulation, transfer of credit, dual credits, develop Credit Transfer Guide; make system more seamless that focuses on retention of students

4. If the goal is to increase accessibility to post-secondary education, what can happen now to effect positive change:

a) Immediately

- **Improve Partnerships/Coordination of Services** – post-secondary institutions and high schools need to be more connected to show students options that are available; institutions need to work together; need more coordination of services that already exist

- **Increase Awareness/Outreach** – inform public of connection between education and socio-economic benefits; take information about post-secondary education to communities; increase dissemination of information to staff and students in institutions

- **Identify/Expand/Promote ACCESS Programs** – identify and promote models that are working; expand and improve programs in quality and quantity; increase funding for ACCESS programs; expand programs for immigrants – provide help for ESL students, expand graduate programs; consider apprenticeship and vocational training as post-secondary education

- **Enhance Support Services** – increase support for peer programs, tutorials; develop mentoring process for encouragement, care, personal, and educational development; attitudes and approaches need to be altered; conduct individual assessment of needs re cultural competence to ensure proper supports are in place; teach teachers and counselors

b) One year from now

- **Improve Communication/Dissemination of Information** – disseminate information to staff and students in junior high, secondary, and post-secondary institutions; provide information as part of professional development for teachers e.g., at SAG; include in curriculum

- **Increase Funding/Resources/Training** – increase funding for transition programming leading to post-secondary education; include accessibility in teacher training/mandate as part of instruction; increase math and science teachers at senior levels

- **Program Related** – create incentives to develop access to post-secondary education; "fast-track" programs based on supply and demand; develop a thorough career mentoring program; create more laddering; make Aboriginal and disability education issues part of an Education degree

- **Need for Supports** – there is need for role models – employment equity; is need for leadership at a high level; develop more partnerships between community-based training and post-secondary institutions; increase commitment (federal and provincial)

c) Three years from now

- **Review existing policies** – address jurisdictional, social, and economic barriers within the education system; make physical accessibility mandatory so entire systems are accessible; change funding structure (band funding, loans process to made easier to access);

- **Improve long-range planning** – focus on future rather than current needs; develop innovative broad-based thinking; strengthen partnerships between post-secondary institutions; involve industry to help prepare students for the workforce

- **Program/Curriculum/Student Focus** – change curriculum to touch more types of learners; move post-secondary programs out into northern environments; increase students' academic level, self-esteem, cultural identity, particularly Aboriginal students through community-based training

5. How can accessibility initiatives be explained as a public good?

In the discussion on how accessibility initiatives can be explained as a public good, participants referred to the investment in the human and personal development of individuals, and in the quality of life. Participants also spoke of the contribution to community development, to social justice, and of the absolute necessity to educate and train the Aboriginal community. Reference was also made to the need for trained workers to meet the supply and demand of the labour market. Investment in education was also viewed as an investment in the future.

6. What are the implications for community-based groups?

Participants pointed out the importance of creating partnerships and close linkages with other community organizations, as well as with post-secondary institutions. As one participant noted, no coordination leads to inefficient programs. It was also noted that increased dialogue and consultation will help create awareness. Some participants also spoke of other implications such as reducing fear, the need to draw on various resources, avoid territorialism, duplication, and "breaking the cycle".

Discussion Following the Institutional Panel

1. What have institutions done to further accessibility?

- **Connect/Reach out to Community** – institutions have developed community-based programs; partnerships have been established with communities; there have been connections with community groups to convince students that post-secondary education is possible; a partnership model has developed between education and industry

- **Establish Specific Programs/Services** – add more clustered training, disability programs/services, distance education, transition programs, Elder programs, programs adapted to work and study/workplace based; analyze retention to understand why people drop out; develop tutorials; expand PLAR, transfer of credit, and increase student advisors/counsellors for disabled and Aboriginal students

2. What more can institutions do within their existing budgets to further accessibility?

- **Increase Student/Social Supports** – accommodate for special needs; develop mentoring systems for faculty and students; increase social supports for students e.g., help disabled students with finding transportation; help new students succeed; provide supports to students after leaving institution; develop fuller advisory program; make effort to engage immigrant students into day to day life at school

- **Program/Policy Related** – establish courses that have more hours, (with tutorials) at no extra cost to students; revise programs by providing on the job training; more career laddering, joint programming, increase Elder Programs; improve flexibility (programs should be worked around needs of people, not collective agreements); make Native Studies a teachable for education; create and implement policy change to ensure accessibility in physical, social, and learning environments for disabled people

- **Staff Related** – support teaching staff (provide socio-cultural orientation); there is a need to sensitize staff; hire more people from underrepresented groups; there is need to change attitude of school/faculty/staff; must raise cultural awareness, change thinking within institutions; break down barriers within institutions

- **Create community-based partnerships** – coordinate existing services; do more to show how education links to labour market and careers; integrate industry; share resources

3. Has increasing student enrollment at the institutions had an impact on accessibility initiatives?

- **Institutional Related** – there is need to focus on institutional change with the increased enrollment of underrepresented groups; dedication is needed from post-secondary institutions to make themselves accessible; accessibility should be seen as a core function

- **Resources** – stretched resources lead to stretched facilities/infrastructure; there are not enough human resources to meet increased enrollment; it is difficult for institutions to do more with less; with increasing enrollment, funds may not increase correspondingly to provide extra support

4. How will institutions advise and work with students to further accessibility?

- **Increase Student Involvement/Focus** – consider health and well-being of students first; students need to be given a voice – to advocate for themselves; bring "potential" students onsite to post-secondary institutions to reduce fear; involve students in sessions like today; give students second choices/second chances; post-secondary institutions need to go out to communities and recruit

- **Program Related** – expand programs such as CUB, BUNTEP, PENT; broaden existing programs or change traditional programs to meet needs of society and future; transfer credits from other institutions, increase articulation, establish common entry requirements; eliminate "screening out" of pre-requisites; have advisory groups attached to each program to evaluate courses and curriculum

- **Institution Related** – institutions need to be student directed; decision making must be shared with community; students need safe, secure environment, institutions must be funded to work with community groups

5. What are the policy implications for institutions?

Participants commented on the need for institutions to be flexible and responsive to student's individual needs, as well be being able to innovate and experiment. Again, participants commented on the importance of institutions continuing discussions and consultations with service providers; to expand on what they are doing; to link with industry, to tap into existing resources, and work with the federal government. Specific examples of creating practicums, work placements, and employment and education equity programs were also provided.

Suggested recommendations for next steps

1. Organize consultations with community groups regarding what they believe is required from the Access Programs in terms of educating workers that will work in their communities, ie – what would an inner-city social worker or teacher need to know.

2. Conduct a needs analysis with respect to needs of students who wish to enter Access programs, in order that planning might be done to ensure that the programs and institutions could be responsive to their needs.

3. Conduct a review of the current Access programs to ensure that they remain relevant in terms on programs offered and students served.

4. Look at ways to build bridges between existing programs such as the Adult Learning Centres and the Access programs.

5. Continue to advocate with decision makers within the institutions and funding agencies regarding the needs of Access students and the value of the investment.

Appendix 1 - Forum Agenda

R.B. Russell Vocational School – 364 Dufferin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB
November 7, 2002: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
November 8, 2002: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 7, 2002

6:45 p.m	**Registration and Tour of Displays– Coffee and Refreshments**
	Welcome and Greetings
7:30 p.m.	– John Wiens and Kim Clare, Facilitators
7:40 p.m.	– Don Robertson, Chair, Council on Post- Secondary Education
	Furthering Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education
7:50 p.m.	– Honourable Diane McGifford Minister of Advanced Education and Training
	Presentations
8:10 p.m.	– Fred Shore
8:25 p.m.	– Lucille Bruce
8:40 p.m.	– Marie Lands
8:55 p.m.	**Closing Remarks for Evening Session** – John Wiens and Kim Clare, Facilitators

Appendix 1 - Forum Agenda (cont.)

R.B. Russell Vocational School – 364 Dufferin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB
November 7, 2002: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
November 8, 2002: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday, November 8, 2002

8:30 a.m	**Coffee and Refreshments**
8:45 a.m.	**Welcome and Overview of Day's Events** – John Wiens and Kim Clare
8:55 a.m.	**Furthering Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education** – Louise Gordon, A/Executive Director Council on Post-Secondary Education
9:05 a.m.	**Presentation** – Randy Herrmann
9:15 a.m.	**Student Panel Discussion** – Gerry Bashforth, Moderator
10:15 a.m.	**Coffee Break**
10:30 a.m.	**Participant Discussion Groups**
11:30 a.m.	**Presentation and Discussion of Group Reports**
12:00 noon	**Lunch**
1:00 p.m.	**Presentation** – George Hickes
1:15 p.m.	**Institutional Panel Discussion** – Nolan Reilly, Moderator
2:45 p.m.	**Coffee Break**
3:00 p.m.	**Participant Discussion Groups**
3:45 p.m.	**Presentation and Discussion of Group Reports** **and** **Facilitators Summary of Day's Work**
4:15 p.m.	**Closing Remarks from Don Robertson**
4:20 p.m.	**Closing Remarks from Minister McGifford**

Appendix 2 - Guest Speaker Biographies

Lucille Bruce – is the Executive Director of Native Women's Transition Centre, a long-term safe house for Aboriginal women and children. Through her board and committee involvement with Ikwe Widdjiitiwin, MaMawi, Wahbung Abinoonjiaag, and North End Women's Resource Centre, Lucille has been instrumental in developing community projects and initiatives that address gaps in services for Aboriginal women and children. Lucille is a board member of the Council on Post-Secondary Education.

Randy Herrmann – is the Director of the Engineering Access Program at the University of Manitoba. Randy received his Bachelor of Science degree in Geological Engineering from the University of Manitoba. After receiving his degree, he left Manitoba to work as a Geotechnical Engineer in Ontario. After spending ten years in Ontario, Randy returned back home to Manitoba to assume his current position. Randy belongs to the Manitoba Métis Federation.

George Hickes – became the first elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in the history of the Province of Manitoba on November 19, 1999. Prior to being elected MLA for Point Douglas in the 1990 Manitoba general election, George was the Executive Director of training for the Limestone Training and Employment Agency. George was re-elected as the MLA for Point Douglas in the 1995 and 1999 provincial general elections.

Marie Lands – is a 1997 graduate of the Inner City Social Work Program with the Winnipeg Education Centre, and is now a counsellor and faculty member. Prior to obtaining her degree, Marie worked as a case manager with New Directions in Winnipeg, and as a front-line child and family services worker in northwestern Ontario. Marie also worked as an administrative secretary with the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry before applying as a student to the Inner City Social Work Program.

Fred Shore – became the Director of the Office of University Accessibility at the University of Manitoba on July 1, 2002 after many years as both a member of the University of Manitoba Aboriginal Network (ABNET) and as an advocate for Aboriginal concerns on campus. Fred joined the Native Studies Department at the U of M in 1984 as a part-time sessional, and as of June 2002, was an Assistant Professor in the Department. For several years, Fred served as Department Head, and more recently, as Chair of the Native Studies Graduate Program.

Appendix 3 - List of Panel Members

Student Panel Members

Moderator: Gerry Bashforth

Panelists:
- Elizabeth Garrow
- Kevin Orchard
- Marjorie Ramos
- Sarah Rabu
- Vanessa Bogar

Institutional Panel Members

Moderator: Nolan Reilly

Panelists:
- Judy Bartel – Assiniboine Community College
- Valerie Beckingham – Keewatin Community College
- Jim Goho – Red River College
- David Dandeneau – Collège universitaire de Saint Boniface
- Thomas MacNeill – Brandon University
- Fred Shore – University of Manitoba
- Patrick Deane – University of Winnipeg

Appendix 4 - Participant Evaluation and Comments

The participant evaluation of the forum was completed by 41 respondents, and includes responses from representatives of all sectors (post-secondary institutions, high schools, community-based organizations, government, and members of the Council on Post-Secondary Education) in attendance.

Things Liked Best About the Forum

The most frequent comment made by participants was the student panel presentations. The student presentations were described by many as "powerful", "courageous", and a "testimony to the profound impact on the success of ACCESS programs in 'real' people's lives".

Other things liked best about the forum were the participant group discussions. Many participants viewed the small group discussions as an opportunity to share and exchange ideas, to meet and network with colleagues, to learn about access initiatives at other organizations and institutions, and to increase awareness about accessibility. Participants also liked the variety and diversity of speakers, panelists, and groups represented, as well as the facilitators and presence of the Minister.

Improvements to the Forum

In response to how the forum could have been improved, participant suggestions included more time spent on small group discussions and a broader focus on specific accessibility issues and groups, i.e., those with disabilities, new immigrants, adult learners, single parents, high schools etc. Other suggestions included student involvement in participant discussion groups, and a mid-panel break or shorter institutional panel discussion. Some participants also expressed a desire to continue the dialogue, with further exploration and follow up on issues discussed.

Things Learned About the Forum That Can Be Applied and Done Differently

Participants provided a variety of responses with regard to things learned about the forum, and what could be applied and done differently. Responses included increased knowledge and awareness of the complexity of accessibility issues and programs at other institutions, as well as recognition of common issues and challenges related to accessibility among the institutions.

Participants also commented on the importance of communication between post-secondary institutions and the need to work more closely together, to create a "shared vision" for increasing participation of community organizations within the larger framework of access to post-secondary education. Some participants

referred to the need to develop linkages or partnerships and coordinated efforts to increase accessibility between community organizations and the institutions.

Participants also spoke of the need to develop specific approaches to accessibility. Some examples provided are the need to develop a broader, comprehensive approach and evaluation plan, and to review and examine current accessibility policies. Other examples were to develop an institutional policy on accessibility, to include high schools and students in access initiatives, and to act as a resource and support for students entering post-secondary education.

Some participants also commented on the need for more work to be done – such as the need to develop policies and procedures to deal with the barriers to accessibility, to expand opportunities, and to increase funding and resources to develop access initiatives.